

Molluscum Contagiosum

What is it?

- Caused by a virus – **Molluscum contagiosum virus (MCV)**
- Common in children, transmitted by direct contact and autoinoculation
- In adolescents and adults often transmitted by contact sports or sexual contact
- **Differential diagnosis:** wart, pyogenic granuloma, basal cell carcinoma, unusual fungal infection (*if immunosuppressed*), benign neoplasm

What does it look like?

- 1-5 mm, skin-coloured, **pearly** dome-shaped papule, often with central umbilication which may contain a white plug
- May occur in clusters
- May have mild surrounding erythema or dermatitis
- Sometimes pruritic, can lead to secondary bacterial infection
- Commonly affects face, neck, axillae, groin, thighs
- May leave pitted scars



Management

1. Prevention of transmission – avoid shared baths and towels
2. Watch and wait – most self-resolve within 12 months, but some may persist for a few years
3. Topical Tx: → Topical liquid nitrogen – causes blister that removes molluscum
→ Topical cantharidin – not for face, wash off in 2-4 hr, causes blister that remove mollusc.
→ Topical tretinoin or imiquimod – causes irritation to stimulate immune response
4. Continue usual activities – cover if possible to prevent spread, but do not withhold child from activities